success in the superior military genius of the new Commander-in-Chief. He laid stress on the essential difference between this kind of offensive and all the others with which they had been afflicted, and between the caution of this newly-revealed strategist and the buoyant unreliability of his predecessor.

Albert Thomas, who at conferences and private conversations had been an unrelenting critic of the Western offensives, I found now to be an equally implacable advocate of the Nivelle attack. He objected to a single gun being taken away from so promising an operation. It was clear that these two eminent statesmen had been swept off their feet by the torrent of enthusiasm for the new method and the new man.

I realised after the Rome Conference that a rigid opposition to this experiment might have disastrous consequences for the Allies. Had Cadorna and his Ministers shown more opposition to enterprise, there was a possibility even then of stemming a current of the result of which I expressed myself at the Rome Conference to be apprehensive. But the moment the combined Italian campaign was ruled out by French resistance and Italian indifference, the only alternative to trying the Nivelle scheme was to do nothing but squat each of us in his own trenches waiting for something to turn up. America had not yet declared war and there was no fresh hope in any quarter of the

*Danger of persistent opposition to their plan*

skies. The Eastern horizon looked dark and stormy. The Western was still a surly grey. The effect on French opinion of a refusal to play our part would have been calamitous. France was unhappy and might easily get out of hand. In spite of the most enormous efforts and the most terrible sacrifices, some of the most prosperous provinces of France were still